

My name is Destiny Rivera I am 23 years old, and I am here in support of preserving the Homeless Youth Initiative line item. I was in foster care for half of my childhood and was in DCF for a while after I turned 22, I was told that once I hit 23, I would be discharged from their care. I'm as afraid I would be homeless, on the streets with my daughter. I decided to beg for help or to refer to anything that can help me since I don't make enough and I'm a single mother to an 8-year-old. It's hard and I have no support system to help me get on my feet. DCF then referred me to the connections program where I met an amazing woman called Mhiku. Since day 1 she's been helping me find secure housing and resources for anything else me and my daughter might need. The few months of being in the connections program I was able to obtain a bank account which I had none of that sort and I was able to find an apartment and be able to feel more secure for my daughter's roof over head which was what I was most worried about. She has been attentive to all my needs since being involved in me and my daughter's life. I appreciate all the help if it wasn't for the connections program I might have been on the streets or in a shelter with my child and I couldn't be more thankful. I work a part time job as a cna and don't make as much as I would like to be stable for me and my child so now that I have the assistance, I can be able to get a full-time job and maybe go back to school to further my career. I also am so thankful I am receiving a section 8, 3-year voucher that would help extremely. This program is a blessing sent from above the way I view it. Thank you, Appropriations Committee, for your time.